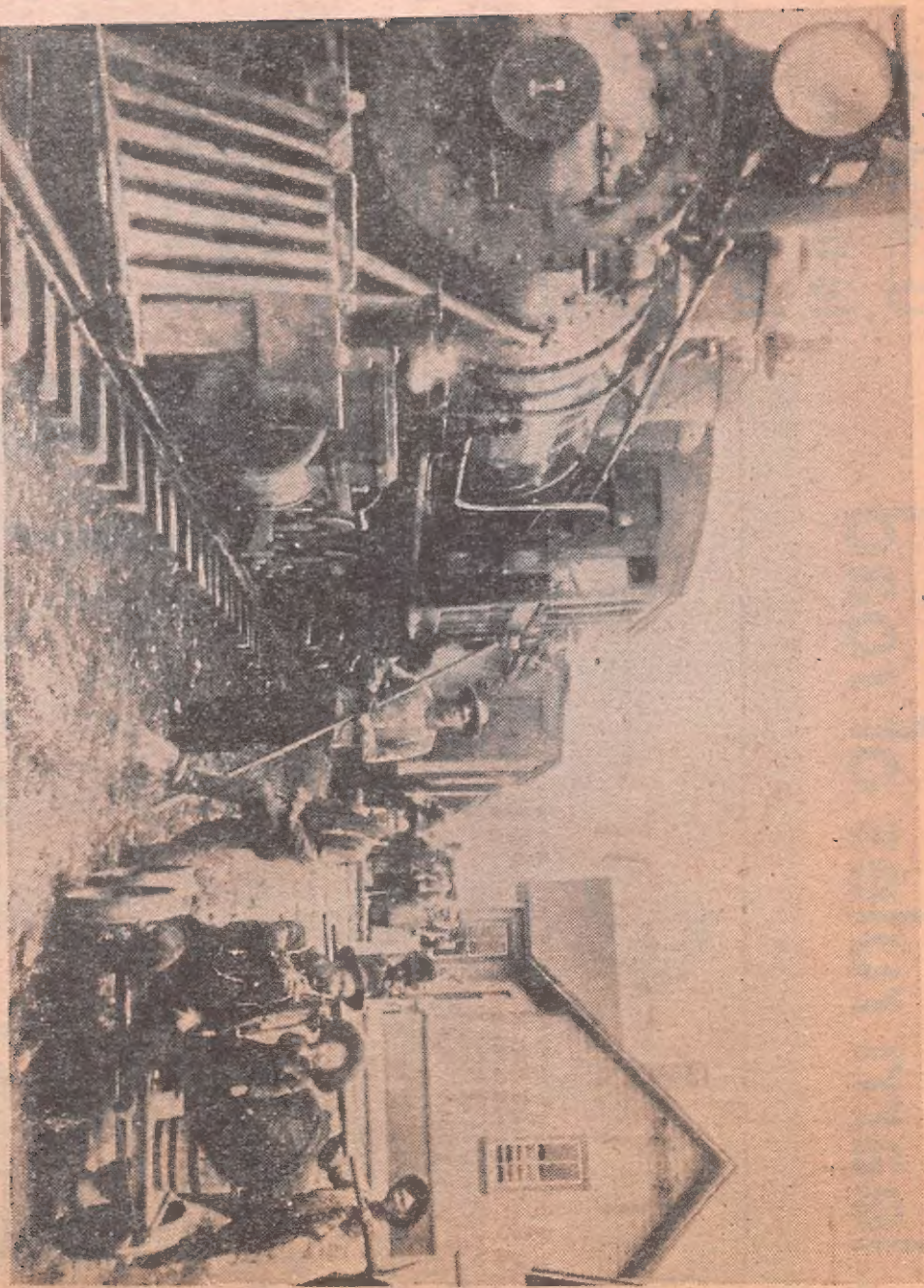


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Steve Belmont's photo collection includes Heber Creeper in its early working days.

Love affair with the Creeper

13 May 1975

By Dorothy O. Rea

Deseret News staff writer

PROVO — Steve Belmont, 34, Provo, and the Heber Creeper have had a love affair going for a long time.

As a matter of fact, when the Creeper stopped being a work train and started being a tourist attraction, Steve volunteered to be a crewman just to escort his hulking sweetie up and down Provo Canyon.

That courtship has gone on since the summer of 1971. This year Steve is on the payroll as a fireman and hopes one day to be an engineer on the excursion train.

The Heber Creeper is an increasingly popular gal. During the Memorial Day weekend, the Pacific Coast Chapter Railway and Locomotive Historical Society will come from the San Francisco area to ride the Creeper. They will go on to Salt Lake City to ride the Saltair Railway.

Belmont has gathered an impressive collection of photographs which amounts to a pictorial history of railroading in Utah.

"My Bicentennial project is to put together the collection so other railroad buffs can see it — maybe at the Heber Creeper station in Heber City," he said.

Jim Belmont, 13, is helping his father put the collection together. He can show you such precious photos as the busy railroad yards at Thistle. There are nostalgic scenes from the Sanpete Valley railroad run — including the Nephi Plaster Mills or the ghost station at Morrison, both in Salt Creek Canyon.

There is a picture recalling a proud day in the Heber Creeper's history, taken before the turn of the century when one of the first trains arrived in Heber decked out in flags and bunting.

Then there's a picture of the study old train bucking a mighty snowslide which roared off Bridal Veil Falls. Also, there are fat water tanks which were landmarks in Utah's history of railroading.

Steve's collection traces the miles and years from the proud steam engine to today's sleek tube-like locomotives.